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AUTHOR MacPherson, R. J. S.
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EQUAL POWER IN ADVERSITY: AN EDUCATIONAL MYTH FOR POST-RENWICK POLICY-MAKING IN NEW ZEALAND EDUCATION

by Dr. R.J.S. Macpherson,
Center for Administrative and Higher Education Studies,
University of New England,
Armidale, NSW 2351, Australia.

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a new myth for New Zealand education policy development; 'equal power in adversity'. Unlike the pre-liberalism Darwinian myth, 'survival of the fittest,' and its replacement, 'equal opportunities,' it would incorporate and reconstrue the socially-critical postulates of the currently hegemonic 'equal outcomes' myth using a pragmatic, holistic and econo-political imagination.

INTRODUCTION

New Zealand education policy making, in aggregated terms, moves today in the spirit and legendry of 'equal outcomes'. As general policy rubrics are, in time, subsumed by others, the purpose of this paper is to explore an alternative by taking advantage of Renwick's analyses.

This analysis was not principally inspired by the foreshadowed retirement of New Zealand's Director-General, but by the application of recent and significant additions to the literature on educational policy-making. In

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particular, some serious limits of the 'equal outcomes' myth became apparent when Beeby's myths-as-hegemonies thesis[1] was applied to Renwick's recent discussion[2] of the troubled econo-political and socio-historical context of education policy-making in New Zealand. The nature of the limitations discovered pointed to the parameters of a new myth, entitled for the purposes of this discussion, 'equal power in adversity'.

The potential potency of this proposed myth is then tested by reference to six major policy areas also examined in detail by Renwick[3] and other policy analysts in New Zealand. The first area comprises the themes that have underpinned the politics of education in the last decade: schooling and socialization; authority and participation; and equality and community. Second are rights to education, while third is the policy context of professional development. The fourth area concerns the paradigm shifts in educational research. The final two areas are the cultural power of language in education, and the dilemmas that attend attempts to reconcile education policy with social change.

Finally, this exploration is only possible because Renwick and Beeby broke the Westminster code of rule-via-reified-policy. The mythical nature of educational policy is now in the public domain. However, as the discussion focusses on the potential potency of the proposed 'equal power in adversity' myth, four associated problems are only given superficial treatment: the limits of education as a vehicle for social policy; the limits of myth as policy; the limits of myth in the steerage of practice; and, ironically, the limits of educational imagination in educative policy-making.

RENWICK, BEEBY AND MOVING TARGETS

The policy analyses offered over the last decade by W.L. Renwick are worthy of close examination. Director-General of Education in New Zealand since 1975, and a practising historian, Renwick has long had the credentials, privileged access to data and the sociological imagination[4] required to review policy issues in a sophisticated manner. For example, in his recently edited collection of his own papers, *Moving Targets*, has deployed his unique amalgam of liberal-progressive and socially-critical[5] thought with scholarly elegance, throughout exhibiting an historical, an anthropological and a critical sensitivity.[6]

The collection has usefully profiled two moving targets; the administrator as philosopher-in-action[7] and the basic currency of policy-making; the ideas

and processes[8] that should govern or lead changes in education through winning intellectual and moral leadership.[9] But while Renwick's ideas offer a challenge to the reader,[10] the policy-maker himself remained in the shadows of the papers selected for *Moving Targets*, as if to encourage others to make or reflect on policy. The reader is left to sense "a strong ethic of duty and commitment to a set of classical ethical values in combination with an attitude of disinterest to outcomes and of non-attachment to rewards".[11]

The content of *Moving Targets* and Renwick's other papers written over the last decade[12] suggest that the field of educational administration would be the richer for a biographical or autobiographical treatment[13] of his uncommon sense of private and personal honor, or at least, of his cultivated art of guardianship. Further, as might be expected of an educative[14] and critical liberal, Renwick's collection and other papers will disturb the purveyors of management science.[15] His policy analyses are for those who appreciate administration as a challenging art to be lived; a sometimes serendipitous experience that is embedded in a moving social canvas of richly philosophical, strategic and political colors.[16]

This point was well illustrated in the introduction to *Moving Targets* by Dr. Beeby, Director of Education from 1940 to 1960. Although Beeby's arguments[17] commanded sustained attention, space here dictates that I be brief and therefore somewhat cursory in my review of his ideas. In essence Beeby portrayed a system's educational policy as a societal myth that gains preponderant influence.

MYTHS AS HEGEMONIES

Beeby portrayed the evolution of education policies in terms of myths in competition. A small point, perhaps, but I would have preferred 'theories in competition'. Myth is a cultural device that embeds webs of belief[18] or theories of how aspects of the world should be seen to be in social systems, most often according to the values of a dominant coalition. While a myth can serve to legitimize and to give order and structure to practices, *explaining* the evolution of a myth requires a context of peoples' theories in competition. Accepting this point rules out an alternative and traditional source of societal myth consistent with bureaucratic rationality, namely divine ordination.[19]

Beeby's strong case was that three myths have, in turn, dominated educational thought since the turn of the century in New Zealand: 'survival

of the fittest', 'equal opportunities' and 'equal outcomes'. These myths, implicitly or explicitly confirmed by other socio-historical analyses[20] and by a recent Select Committee report,[21] explain the mobilization of bias in education services by explicating the mindsets and assumptions that have prevailed at particular times.

Beeby's general thesis can therefore be trusted, even though there were two other minor flaws to his position. First, he systematically de-emphasized the extent to which myths give myth-makers steerage over education policy.[22] Second, his use of dualisms, such as conservative versus radical and traditional versus progressive,[23] offered limited conceptual leverage in the face of plural orientations[24] to the curriculum. In other words, apart from his Deweyan[25] valuing of long term consequences of education for individual children, it was not at all clear how Beeby *evaluated* plural and competing theories of curriculum in his policy-making. On the other hand, none of these technical flaws were crucial to his explication of policy as myth.

To capitalize on the strengths of Beeby's thesis suggests applying his concept of myths-as-hegemonies. Assume, if you will, that policy myths are built, altered and terminated according to the values of leading mythmakers, the interaction of influential policy-makers, and the contexts that in large part predetermine the mindsets of policy-makers.[26] Presume also that this dialectical process will continue to involve values, data, conjecture and refutation.[27] Hence, if we can also have reliable access to the perceptions that a leading policy-maker has of the current interactional situation and its contextual antecedents, we would have a partial and biased but empirical basis and mode for predicting future myths. Findings would be even more trustworthy if the leading policy-maker selected had enjoyed privileged access to the educational affairs of state for a substantial period of time. Further, as educational myths operate at very aggregated levels of perceptions and preferences in education systems, the methodological limitations involved in such an approach appeared tolerable, at least enough to warrant a trial.

The results were fascinating. When Beeby's myths-as-hegemonies thesis was applied to Renwick's very recent analysis[28] of the difficult social and econo-political context of New Zealand education, the currently dominant 'equal outcomes' myth failed in three crucial areas. First, it did not appear to offer immediate and practical direction to clients, teachers, leaders and system managers in addition to its intrinsic moral appeal. Second, it did not acknowledge the troubled econo-political and moral context of education policy-making, especially the vigorous renegotiation of power relationships in times of contraction. Third, the feasibility of equalizing learning outcomes

acquired a spongy credibility because it seemed to set aside five 'givens' in educational policy-making: a capitalistic environment, variable client talent, plural client and professional ends, the politicization of education and the limits of education as a vehicle for implementing social policy.

The socially-critical parameters of the 'equal outcomes' myth have usefully focussed attention on the structures in society and in education that create distortions of communication, opportunity and outcome. Missing, however, is the econo-political machinery required to reinterpret the 'equalization of outcomes' myth in practical and educative terms; particularly about the legitimate redistribution of power in an economically drier, aggressively multi-cultural, overtly politicized and increasingly international context.

The trial therefore indicated that any myth intended to subsume 'equal outcomes' will have to have greater explanatory leverage and higher credibility in the econo-political and moral economies of education.[29] Given these contingencies, the new myth proposed was 'equal power in adversity'. The potency of this proposed myth will now be explored with reference to Renwick's and others' thinking in the remaining sections of this paper.

EQUAL POWER IN ADVERSITY

The first reason for exploring this proposed myth is that the equitable distribution of power in financially constrained circumstances has been a major theme in Renwick's writings for over a decade, especially as evidenced in *Moving Targets*. Despite the pervasiveness of 'equal outcomes' as a social ideal in education, Renwick appeared to have used 'equal power in adversity' as his administrative touchstone. I mean touchstone in the Quinean[30] sense, as it helped him assay and sense the implementation of 'golden' futures. This touchstone also provided him with a process to test the value or qualities of proposals, to identify overlap between (not myths but) theories in competition, and thus to reconcile evidence, interests and his own critical-liberalism in his policy analysis and implementation.

'Issues behind the Issues', the first chapter in *Moving Targets*, illustrates this point well. There Renwick tartly acknowledged that education "in New Zealand is a highly political activity, and matters which can be identified as a concern are quickly dressed up as an issue, something vexatious to 'us' that 'they' should be relieving or resolving".[31] The issues of the day included sex education, examinations, women's rights, unifying the inspectorate, salary

differentials, integration of private schools, administration of child care, the new Government's policies, lay involvement in the selection of principals, and administrative reorganization.

As if to follow Luke's[32] radical advice on the nature of power, Renwick eschewed the tools of issue and interest group analysis. He focussed instead on the biases of the political system itself, and the consequences of past controls on the political agenda in education. He did this by agenda setting via false abstraction — to "exercise" some of his own "hobby horses".[33] He conflated the multiple issues above to three areas of general concern: schooling and socialization; authority and participation; and equality and community.

First, the relationship between schooling and socialization was becoming troubled at the time because "the more the schools are expected to share the primary socialization of the young, the less the agreement within New Zealand community on the desired objectives of primary socialization".[34] Three strategies were proposed: an ethic of cultural respect to resolve the pervasively male and Pakeha[35] ambience in education; lifelong, informal, continuing and adult education to extend the public's view of secondary socialization; and to review vested interests prior to redistributing funds for life-long education. The argument was, in small part, ill-founded. Defining schooling as the 'organized arrangements' for adding to learners' knowledge and skill, failed to admit of the potent 'hidden curriculum'. Further, as Renwick and others[36] have acknowledged since, ostensibly neutral schooling distributes knowledges and skills that are valued differently as social and material goods.

Second, tension between authority and participation was, in Renwick's view, traceable to an ambivalence about authority in New Zealand's social history[37] and to long-standing disquiet over centralism. There is substantial support for this account. The demise of provincial governments in the 1860s and 1870s begat a centrally financed, national system of education that a century later was found[38] to suffer three perennial problems: local suspicion of central power; delegation of ministerial responsibility versus reserve powers; and divisional versus functional directorates. Hence, although the Westminster concept of Ministerial responsibility for public funds was deployed by Renwick to justify administrative centralization, it was the question of political decentralization (or the potential for structural devolution of power in education[39]) that was given extensive treatment. His touchstone became even more manifest in the exemplars deployed.

The networks of consultation, how constituencies have developed to serve

interests, and the secular move from consultation to participation were applauded; all arguments implying Renwick's commitment to the participatory dialectics of educative democracy.[40] But, having recognized that current consultative practices were an activity for the elites in the educational establishment, there was then an instance of logical discontinuity when Renwick invited the reader to accept that the real problems the system faced were about learning participation at school level.

Also gerrymandered aside by the dualistic center-periphery analysis was the unresolved issue of district reorganization. Renwick could only conclude[41] by encouraging schools to facilitate and accommodate participation, especially so as the traditional props of hierarchically distributed power and status, professional status, and lay acquiescence, were all seen to be losing purchase in the politics of education.

Renwick then appealed again[42] for greater equality and community as educational outcomes when he called on primary school teachers to reform their practices. He pointed to the limitations of liberal-progressive ideology, despite the major advance it represented over vocationalism, and then emphasized equitable social outcomes as the basis of socially-critical criteria for the evaluation of professional practice.

To summarize to this point, the urbane tone of 'Issues behind the Issues' was very deceptive. The rationale and three radical implications of redistributing power in education were gently but firmly made evident. Administrators in education would have to be more politically effective at acquiring and justifying expenditure of public resources. Educators would have to relate their teaching ideologies to the role of schools as mediators of plural demands on education services. And as pluralism would be accepted by policy makers as an emergent societal norm, participation would have to, in time, replace consultation.

There is, however, another problem with Renwick's center-periphery mindset on organization. If the reported secular trend to participatory politics continues to accelerate, the administrative myth of 'equal outcomes' will be sorely tested as a major justification for political centralism. Indeed, it would not be the rubbery construct of 'equal outcomes', but *real local power to select outcomes* that would become the primary index of equality.

Further, Renwick's strong promotion of the ethic of cultural pluralism, especially when sharpened by a troubled economic context, suggests the need for multiple, vertical and horizontal negotiations to distribute power and other resources. Such structural evolution would also be needed to produce the trade-offs required to retain socially and politically acceptable

levels of coherence in systemic policies.

The point is that the very nature of complex hybridous restructuring[43] (today's informal reality in many education systems, I suspect) simply outspans center-periphery thinking about structure. A final reason for setting aside this dualistic organizational paradigm is the likely contingency, implied by Renwick,[44] that educative managers will have to work with interest groups and individuals who will regard 'equal power in adversity' as a right.

RIGHTS

Valuing the degree of power that individuals attain from education leads to viewing the outcomes as cultural capital; capital that is subsequently used to purchase access to social assets, material goods and life chances. Further, to realize a right to fair shares in practical terms, means first revising the negotiated balances between claims. Hence, in more aggregated terms, to set egalitarianism against libertarianism implies rebalancing consumer sovereignty with societal rights. It also implies reconciling the exercising of personal rights with the ongoing negotiation of shared democratic ideals in a plural context. And as Renwick has identified, it means reappraising "the relative weightings given to ideals of need and desert in the distribution of the rights of individuals to education."[45]

His argument was that the ideal of desert is consistent with libertarianism and explicit in the traditional rationale of resource allocation. The ideology of desert was also demonstrated to underpin expectations held of the system and to legitimize the functions served by school organization and practice. Most immoral of all, to me, is that the ideology of desert has also been used to justify the Gaussian myth of normal distribution being drawn uncritically from the natural sciences and applied in the norm-referenced grading of individual's learning to bias access to cultural capital.

Next, Renwick illustrated the secular trend away from the ideal of desert (which fosters, expects and legitimizes inequalities) and described the strengthening egalitarian ideal evident in needs-driven policies. Convincing evidence he cited, in this regard, included the critical questioning of the priorities given to the disadvantaged, to continuing education and retraining, and to early childhood education as part of lifelong education.

Rather than allowing formal education to retain "the social mission of legitimizing"[46] unequal outcomes, Renwick proposed a criteria-referenced

approach to evaluating student progress, school development, and implicitly, administration.

It was here that Renwick's intellectual and moral touchstone again became manifest. By providing a conceptual bridge between the preferred ideal of needs in resource allocation, and schooling for the mastery of cultural capital, he implicitly demonstrated that 'equal power in adversity' could come to be seen as a viable entitlement, or if interest groups of professionals will, a claimable right. So powerful is the professional lobby in New Zealand education, this latter possibility bears consideration. Claims could be easily mounted if the proposed educational myth is seen as compatible with 'professionalism'.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

For a myth of 'equal power in adversity' to be seen as a viable entitlement implies professional and leader readiness in education, an issue also attended to in *Moving Targets*.[47] In order to relate trends in administrative practices to the responsibilities of employing authorities for professional development, Renwick again began his analysis with the distribution of powers in their historical context:

> Our systems still pivot around a Minister of Education who, as a member of Cabinet, is the central source of authority and finance. ... And the question is whether State Departments which were predicated on the Benthamite model, and which developed their traditions and their ethos as instruments of democratic centralism, are adapting to the needs and possibilities of societies that are being jobbled increasingly by the currents and cross-currents of cultural diversity, moral relativism, professional aspiration, institutional imperialism and participatory democracy.[48]

Having reviewed the nature of professionalism, specialization, voluntarism and self-determination, lay participation, cultural pluralism and the legitimacy problems of democratic centralism, Renwick provided seven propositions, termed conclusions, that merit close attention.

First was the need to renegotiate a more eclectic policy of professional development, wherein, and second, lay-professional relationships would become as important as those between professionals. Third, implied was that

professional development policies and planning would not be exempt from the general ideological contests in education. The fourth pragmatic proposition was that the motivations, expectations and perceived realities of professionals would be the loci of real development. Fifth, the current low level of policy coherence in the system was held to imply the need for development at the periphery and in communications. Hence, the sixth proposition implied that the devolution of power would require new approaches to accountability. Note here again the limitations of the center-periphery organizational paradigm. Finally, Renwick proposed that professional development should evolve in a context of continuing education.

Although these 'conclusions' were then pressed into service as the premises of an argument for greater coherence in systemic policies, the reassertion of democratic centralism was tempered with pragmatism. As Renwick noted,[49] professional roles have been renegotiated publicly for some years at many levels. The tradition of professional autonomy has been traded-off against community participation, even against self-determination.

It was notable that Renwick's closing position again highlighted his touchstone. Fundamentally concerned with the facilitation of participative democracy in adverse circumstances, he found the Benthamite ideology of accountability wanting, and yet, was obliged to retain it to serve the Westminster notion of Parliamentary responsibility. And while his center-periphery thinking, or his structural-functional imagination, could not then admit of multiple and perpendicular negotiating structures to reconstrue the organizational dilemmas involved, his sociological imagination could generate a new mindset for educative administration. Such is the paradoxical power of shadowy paradigms; an emergent issue in policy analysis.

EQUALIZING THE POWER OF PARADIGMS

For Renwick to be 'This Side of Paradigm'[50] and to remain true to his critical-liberal touchstone, it meant making an historical, cultural and critical appreciation of the power of paradigm in educational research. Following Kuhn,[51] he attacked the pervasive and unquestioning belief in 'The Scientific Method' derived from logical empiricism. Second assailed was research conducted within the limitations of a single discipline. The third target was research that did not allow practitioners to make personal sense of findings.[52] Finally, to equalize the potential power involved, he laid siege to research that made no effort to repatriate itself to an educational reality of learning

or teaching. Administering went unmentioned.

These views about the nature of educational research paradigms deserve more secure foundations. Recent epistemological research notes that:

> There are many different languages and logics in educational research. One helpful way to get some perspective on them is to see their roots in three dominant 20th century philosophical traditions (a la Bernstein): logical empiricism (positivism); interpretive theories (analytic, phenomenological, and hermeneutic); and critical theory (neo-Marxist). Another way is to demonstrate, through an analysis of the universal phenomena of pedagogy, that empirical (causal), interpretive (meaningful), and critical (normative) dimensions characterize pedagogy and hence all need to be studied if pedagogical research is to be honest to its subject matter.[53]

Hence Renwick's rigid demarcation of educational research (valuable when concerned with educational contexts, with formative evaluation, with the reconstruction of educational realities, with the advancement of knowledge and meanings given to professional practice, and with multi-disciplinarianism) gave absolute priority to his brand of reformism without acknowledging its relative merits. Further, in so doing he left undeveloped many of the methodological, pragmatic, political, organizational and philosophical conditions that pertain or should apply. For example, three arguments can be advanced to add balance to Renwick's position on research paradigms. First, to identity general purposes:

> the basic difference between using critical approaches and interpretive or positivist mindsets, is that socially critical researchers want to understand agency, intentions and values in order to improve education as a social force for change. Where positivists emphasize 'truth' and interpretivists 'meaning', critical researchers strive for the reconstruction of society.[54]

It would be difficult to justify any absolute position on priorities, even in theory, but especially in a world of plural educational values. It is also worth hoping that 'truth' and 'meaning' would still be researched in a socially-critical paradise. And there is more to it than simply rebalancing socially-critical imperatives with holistic pragmatism.

Commitment to research purpose, in itself, is no guarantee of the trustworthiness of research findings, whatever the paradigm used. It is important

for educative administrators to be able to evaluate the epistemological coherence between the research problem selected, and the paradigm used either consciously or unconsciously, the metaphors of key terms, the propriety of research techniques used to address the problem, and to complete the audit validity and reliability. Indeed, all paradigms are to be valued for their strengths while also recognizing that each precasts the type of knowledge claims that the researcher using it will be able to make. As different types of knowledge have been created for different purposes and posses different assumptions and methods of justification, boundaries to understanding in education are inevitable unless the epistemological relativity of paradigms and findings are appreciated. It has recently been demonstrated[55] that such understanding should be encouraged with some urgency in education.

Nevertheless, for the time being, there was a practical and educational earthiness to Renwick's position. His reformist agenda and his promotion of a radical humanist paradigm[56] would have been most evident in action research and pedagogical consultancy; both practicable strategies of empowerment in difficult times that work through the cultural agency of language.

THE CULTURAL POWER OF LANGUAGE

Yet another strategy consistent with Renwick's touchstone was evident in his analysis of 'Language in Our Lives';[57] the demystification of 'professionalism'. Facing a conference of secondary school language teachers apparently concerned with the continuing reconstruction of their service, he traversed familiar terrain; the historical, cultural and critical contexts of the surface issues, to attend again to the issue of comparative power.

Linguistic traditions and tragedies were related to ethnic interests and dominance, principally to demonstrate that the "hegemony of foreign languages"[58] drew support from ethnocentric and elitist beliefs as well as from the ideals of desert and cultural assimilation. To strip away other unwarranted myths of language teaching, Renwick then noted the origins of more recent demand: the rapid urbanization of Maori and Pacific Islanders and their need for cultural identity and self-respect; the urgent case for cultural exchange in a nation coming to terms with the moral imperatives of multi-culturalism;[59] export marketing; tourism: and modern communications evaporating cultural and geographic isolation.

The surface tension appeared to be greatest over the Maori challenge to the position of French, and predictably, Renwick's response was to argue

against a new Maori hegemony, for "cooperative arrangements"[60] at the periphery, and, once again, for the allocation of scarce resources to reflect equalized power. Hence, as the central themes and strategies of argument of *Moving Targets* have been made explicit, and are summarized in the final chapter, 'Marrying the Spirit of the Age'[61] it will be used only to explore further the potency of the proposed myth.

THE SPIRIT OF 'EQUAL POWER IN ADVERSITY'

Beeby noted that for an 'educational myth' to be acceptable and effective:

> it must be in general accord with some strong — though not always clearly defined — public aspiration; it must be expressed in language flexible enough to permit a reasonably wide range of interpretations, and yet be specific enough to provide practical guidance to administrators, planners and teachers; it must be unattainable, at least for that generation, if it is to sustain twenty-five years of change without being constantly and confusingly modified.[62]

Further, by noting that the widespread understanding of an educational myth's intrinsic nature encourages rival myths, Beeby was clearly seeking to accelerate the traditionally slow pace of myth evolution. He also alluded to the need for a vigorous moral and political economy to sustain valued myths; key people must fight for a myth's birth, maturity and middle age. But like ancient faiths, myths do not die, they fade as they are subsumed into the fresh interpretation provided by a new myth.[63]

To what extent, then, could the myth of 'equal power in adversity' provide a more coherent sense of direction by articulating the essence and unpredictable consequences of today's trends, beliefs and events? Some stringent criteria are available. Renwick's comprehensive analysis[64] concluded that "three fundamental questions" will have to be addressed in the decades ahead:

> the nature of professional activity in education and the relationship of professionals to others in the provision of educational services; the form of organization and management of education; and the development of networks of information, advice

> and guidance that will become more diverse and diffused, allowing the possibility of greater initiative but carrying the danger of massive confusion.[65]

To complete the challenging scenario, Renwick also noted that as the "panaceas of science and technology and the prospect of universal material advancement now have the diminished appeal of period pieces ..., people's view of themselves, their circumstances, and the future of their societies as they would like to see them, are now grounded in moral commitment."[66]

If promoted in such circumstances, the myth of 'equal power in adversity' could meet Beeby's criteria by offering the holistic and pragmatic symbolism of econo-political and moral economies. It would speak in general but direct terms to a needs-driven redistribution of power and other resources. It would appeal for and legitimate the evolutionary and hybridous restructuring of educational administration. The proposed myth would also encompass and reinterpret the trading-off of systemic coherence for democratic empowerment. The question then is, why would the myth gain purchase at social and personal levels?

There is a deep social magic to myth, deeper than suggested to this point. There are other more basic reasons why the proposed myth could acquire potency in addition to those developed above. They derive from the relationship between educational myths and the intrinsic nature of societal,[67] identity[68] and primal[69] myths.

Education policy-making is like social policy-making. Both processes attempt to reconcile stark alternatives: individual freedom and collective futures; highly structured peace and anarchic chaos; and the regulation of general liberties versus the guaranteeing of personal and minority rights to public resources. Educational myths therefore have to give form to communal and personal learning and teaching, projecting a gestalt that defines a shareable ethos. A myth of 'equal power in adversity' would articulate a socio-political basis for finding touchstone and sharing educational processes and resources, despite incompatible purposes. It would foster interpersonal and intercultural valuing as well as reinforcing group self-esteem and identity. The third paradox is that the myth would simultaneously legitimize national coherence and isolated group ideologies in educational policies.

Of particular relevance in today's socio-political context, the proposed myth would also project new generalities about traditionally maltreated groups. It would symbolically empower women, Maoris, Pacific Islanders, the handicapped, pre-schoolers, adult learners, and other groups disadvan-

taged by the myths that have been seen to justify limited access to social and material assets related to life chances. It would also reveal and accommodate latent interests, such as the prior rights of students that were highlighted by the recent Select Committee report on the quality of teaching.[70]

While educational myths give meaning to teaching, learning and leading educators, they also serve, to a degree, as identity myths. Hence their personal appeal. In this regard they can be life-denying by hindering human endeavor, especially by limiting the exploration of new concepts, paradigms and life-styles. If, on the other hand, and this could well be the case with 'equal power in adversity', an identity myth would be life-affirming to the extent that it is held to be personally empowering.

Educational myths can also become primal. If educators employ them to sanctify their service, usually in terms of purposes, their practices take on a higher meaning. To claim a value that endures beyond the material limits to life is to reach for immortality. Administrators seeking to create new organization is, I believe, clear evidence of this deep urge. Similarly, teachers' striving to create educated students from the intellectually unwashed is another indicator of the primal claim.

If a keystone of educational professionalism is creation myth, and if Renwick is right about the socio-political touchstone of coming decades being the democratic negotiation of the *moral* commitments of clients, 'equal power in adversity', or some very similar educational myth, will be required to satisfy primal, other identity and societal needs in New Zealand education.

SUMMARY

The two educational administrators with the greatest influence of all permanent heads on education policies in New Zealand's history, Renwick and Beeby, have served education well with their analyses of policies and myth. The mythology of education policies is now in the public domain.

In general terms, the Darwinian myth was enveloped and extended by the development of liberalism. The consequence, the 'equal opportunities' myth, was, in turn, reinterpreted during the late 1970s by radical humanism or neo-revisionism as an 'equal outcomes' myth. The 'equal power in adversity' myth proposed here, would, in turn, incorporate and reconstrue the socially-critical postulates of the 'equal outcomes' myth by using a pragmatic, holistic and econo-political imagination.

Finally, whatever the potency of the proposed myth, four other issues worthy of exploration have been indicated by this discussion: the limits of education as a vehicle for social policy; the limits of myth as policy; the limits of policy in the steerage of practice; and, ironically, the slow rate at which the educational imagination has developed in educative policy-making.

NOTE

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3. Renwick, W.L. *Moving Targets...* op.cit.

4. Mills, C.W. *The Sociological Imagination*. Harmondsworth. Penguin. 1970.

5. The nature of Renwick's personal philosophy of education is an interesting issue. It appears to incorporate both subjective and dialectical conceptions of knowledge. Evident are both liberal-progressive priorities for the practical, expressive and cultural arts of communication, reflection and refinement, and the socially-critical emphases on socio-historical and economic determinants of agency, along with attention to knowledge for social justice created through critical reflection and participation. A further complication is that he upholds the reproductive functions of education in society that rely on an objective view of knowledge (see Nash, note 10). Given the general tone of his writings, a label of critical-liberalism is probably more appropriate than materialist-pragmatism which would carry connotations of uncompromising physicalism and an eshewal of idealism. See also note 13.

6. Giddens, A. *Sociology: A Brief but Critical Introduction*. Second Edition. Basingstoke. Macmillan. 1986. pp.13-22.

7. I have long sensed in Renwick an enduring and private honor that reflects Hodgkinson's (see note 8) version of neo-Stoicism. By these lights, administrative work is intrinsically honorable, obsessed with rightness in duty and indifferent to personal success or failure. This is not a fanciful application. Consider, for example, Renwick's position in an international forum with his Minister when he argued, without exhibiting disloyalty, that the "disappointing" effort "to build a cadre" of policy reviewers was due, in part, to the "government" ... "giving a rather special interpretation to policy-oriented research" (*Review of National Policies for Education: New Zealand.* Paris. OECD. 1983. p.119). This position was in contrast to the neo-classical vocationalism espoused at the OECD by the then Minister of Education (ibid. pp.118-21 and M. Wellington, *New Zealand Education in Crisis.* Auckland. Endeavor Press. 1985).

8. Hodgkinson, C. *The Philosophy of Leadership.* Oxford. Basil Blackwell. 1983. p.26.

9. This process defines the nature of hegemony. See Poynting, S. "Flies and Elephants: The Common Sense of Relevance," *Curriculum Perspectives.* 6,2. October, 1986. pp.17-22.

10. Renwick has long been an active participant in academic debate, and will challenge the misuse of his ideas. See, for example, his pungent "News for Dr. Nash" *New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers Association Journal.* Term 1, 1983. pp. 32-34. Also see Nash's response: "The Flow from School to Work", in J. Codd, R. Harker and R. Nash (eds.) *Political Issues in New Zealand Education.* Palmerston North. Dunmore. 1985. which asserts (p.145) that Renwick, like other educational administrators, "officially" maintains "the struggle against reproduction theory (ironic, in view of their implicit structural functionalism) but accept it tacitly."

11. Hodgkinson, C. *The Philosophy of Leadership* op.cit. p.221.

12. Renwick has delivered at least 82 papers since 1975 as Director-General. A detailed list will not be provided here. And while there is within American political science, a group of academics known as 'President-watchers' (Davies, cited in Gronn P. "Notes on Leader Watching" in Macpherson R.J.S. (ed.) *Ways and Meanings of Research in Educational Administration.* Armidale. UNE. p.100) there is largely untapped scope for a parallel research programme in Australasian education that focusses on leading permanent policy-makers and policy-making processes.

13. For an interpretive methodology, see Macpherson, R.J.S. "Towards Biographical and Autobiographical Research in Educational Administration", *Educational Administration Review.* 4, 1. 1985. pp.14-28.

14. An emergent definition, and a research programme supported by three State education systems in Australia to develop a 'practical theory' of educative leadership, is described in Duignan P.A. and Macpherson R.J.S. "The Educative Leadership Project" *Educational Management and Administration.* 15, 1. 1987. pp.49-62.

15. If there is a standard teaching text in the tertiary curriculum of educational administration, it is *Educational Administration: Theory, Research and Practice* by Hoy W.K.and Miskel C.G. New York. Random. 1982. They maintain that theoretically sound educational administration is an behavioral science (p.14) based on researched 'facts' as axiological "standards do not constitute theory" (p.19). Major assaults on the natural systems ideology involved and on the uncritical structural-functionalism implicit in the technical managerialism they offer have triggered major theoretical developments in the field (see Greenfield T.B. "Theory about Organization: A New Perspective and its Implications for Schools" in Houghton V. et al. (eds.) *Management in Education: The Management of Organizations and Individuals,* London: Ward Lock OU; and Bates R.J. "Towards a Cultural Practice of Educational Administration" *Studies in Educational Administration.* 27. Armidale. Commonwealth Council of Educational Administration.)

16. Two illustrations are Renwick's "Emblems of Identity: New Zealand Painting and Carving and the Arts in Cultural Diversity", keynote address to the 23rd World Congress of the International Society for Education through Art, Adelaide, S.A., August., 1978; and "My Job: Welcome to It", a paper given to 'Education I: Education and Society', Victoria University of Wellington, 6 October 1982.

17. Beeby, C.E. op.cit.

18. Quine, W.V. and Ullian, J.S. *Web of Belief.* New York. Random House. 1978.

19. Larue, G.A. *Ancient Myth and Modern Man.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. Prentice-Hall. 1975. pp. 64-130.

20. See Graham J. "Settler Society" in W.H.Oliver (ed.) *The Oxford History of New Zealand.* Wellington. Oxford. 1981. pp.131-133; Sorrenson M.P.K. "Maori and Pakeha" ibid pp.190-193; King, M. "Between Two Worlds" ibid pp. 282-283; Gibbons P.J. "The Climate of Opinion" ibid pp. 322-324; Chapman, R. "From Labour to National" ibid p.324; Hawke, G.R. "The Growth of the Economy" ibid p.390; Dunstall, G. "The Social Pattern" ibid pp.413-429; Watson J.E. (ed.) *Policies for Participation: Trends in Educational Administration in Australia and New Zealand.* Wellington. NZEAS. 1977; McKenzie D. "The Politics of Non-Planning: A Review of the

Case for National Education Planning in New Zealand" in M. Clark (ed.) *The Politics of Education in New Zealand.*Wellington. NZCER. 1981. pp. 27-42; Openshaw, R. "Patriotism and New Zealand State Primary Schools during a Decade of Change" ibid pp.103-121; Cummings I. and Cummings A. *History of State Education in New Zealand 1840-1975.* Wellington. Pitman. 1978; Parkyn G.W. (ed.) *The Administration of Education in New Zealand.* Wellington. New Zealand Institute of Public Administration. 1954; Robertson G.H. and O'Rourke B.T. *Schools in New Zealand Society.* Sydney. Wiley. 1973; and Bates R.J. (ed.) *Prospects in New Zealand Education.* Auckland. Hodder and Stoughton. 1970.

21. A bipartisan affirmation of the 'equal outcomes' myth was recently given by a Parliamentary Select Committee. See the Education and Science Select Committee's *Report on the Inquiry into the Quality of Teaching.* (Noel Scott, Chairman) Second Session, Forty-First Parliament. 1986. See also Macpherson, R.J.S. "The 'Scott Report' on the Quality of Teaching in New Zealand: A Critical Review", in Northfield, J., Duignan P.A. and Macpherson R.J.S. (eds.) *Educative Leadership for Quality Teaching.* Educative Leadership Monograph Series No.1. Sydney. NSW Department of Education. 1987.

22. Beeby, C.E. in Renwick, W.L. *Moving Targets* ... op.cit., p.xxiv. It was, for example, somewhat self-effacing for Beeby to note that the "'survival' myth, when it was impolitic to support it, was not killed by the 'equality' myth ..." The point here is that the reification of myth imposes a false limit on the political, critical and phenomenological analyses of policy processes. It would be ingenuous, for example, to suppose that Beeby was, as the Westminster myth of public administration has it, merely a neutral and informed advisor to his policy-making Ministers, and thereby distanced from myth-making. By all informal accounts he was and still is, a master of these arts .

23. Beeby C.E. loc.cit., pp. xii, xiii, xxvi.

24. Beeby's description encompassed neo-classical, vocational, ethnic, liberal-meritocratic, liberal-progressive, religious socially-critical, and pragmatic/holistic positions. To define these terms I have adopted Walker's typology of curriculum value positions: neo-classical, with an emphasis on the conservation of an authoritative cultural tradition; vocational, where the emphasis is on individual survival through employment; liberal-meritocratic, with its emphasis on personal autonomy and achievement expressed in egalitarian terms; liberal-progressive, which emphasized personal autonomy in the context of social and cultural harmony; socially-critical, where the em-

phasis is on social change through educational action; religious, where the context is one of specific moral and practical commitments, and the concern is with the development of personal beliefs and attitudes; and Walker's own, materialist pragmatism, which assumes that people are rational and emphasizes coherence and mutually productive problem solving and learning procedures for individuals and groups (see Walker J.C. in collaboration with Duignan P.A., Francis D., Flynn P., Macpherson R.J.S., Maxwell B. and Wade B. "A Philosophy of Leadership in Curriculum Development" in Walker J.C. (ed.) *Educative Leadership for Curriculum Development.* Educative Leadership Monograph Series No. 2. Canberra. ACT Schools Authority. 1987).

25. Consistent with Ever's application of Deweyan ideas. See Evers C.W. in collaboration with Dillon D., Duignan P.A., Long M., Macpherson R.J.S., Norman M., and Williams J. ' "Ethics and Ethical Theory in Educative Leadership: A Pragmatic and Holistic Approach" in Evers C.W. (ed.) *Moral Theory for Educative Leadership.* Educative Leadership Monograph Series No. 3. Sydney. NSW Department of Education. 1987.

26. See Giddens, A. *Sociology* ... op.cit. for a theoretical framework, and Oliver, W.H. (ed.) *Oxford History* ... op.cit. and Cummings I. and Cummings A. *History of State Education* ... op.cit. for the empirical contexts.

27. Popper, K.R. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery.* London. Hutchinson. 1959.

28. Renwick, W.L. "Forty Years On ..." op.cit.

29. It appears that New Zealand policy-makers are facing general trends becoming evident in similar international contexts. See, for recent treatments: Dror Y. *Policymaking under Adversity.* London. Transaction Books. 1986; and Pratt, J. "Education under Adversity" *Educational Management and Administration.* 15, 1. 1987. pp.19-22.

30. For an application see Walker, J.C. (ed.) *Educative Leadership for Curriculum Development.* op.cit.

31. Renwick, W.L. *Moving Targets* ... op.cit. p.1.

32. Luke, S. *Power: A Radical View.* Hongkong. Macmillan. 1974.

33. Renwick, W.L. *Moving Targets* ... op.cit. p.2.

34. Renwick, W.L. *Moving Targets* ... loc.cit. This position, developed from that proposed by P.L. Berger and T. Luckman (*The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge.* New York. Doubleday. 1966), lacks the critical edge of later papers. The interesting adjustment to Renwick's position was well articulated in Codd, J. "Demo-

cratic Principles and the Politics of Curriculum Change in New Zealand" in M. Clark (ed.) *The Politics of Education* ... op.cit. pp. 57-61.

35. A Maori word originally meaning foreign or foreigner, then European. Today the term usually means non-Maori New Zealander, although this begs further questions. Even the legal situation is confused. Cummings and Cummings (ibid, pp.325-326) list 23 Acts that define 'Maori' (and thereby non-Maori) in different ways according to the subject under discussion.

36. For a neo-Marxist and systematic treatment, see Codd J., et al. (eds.) *Political Issues* ... op. cit.

37. Particularly evident in two antagonistic strands; "the principle of popular sovereignty and the principle of strong and active central government." See Robinson, A.D. "The Political Culture" in Gold H. (ed.) *New Zealand Political Perspectives.* Auckland. Longman Paul. 1985. pp.15-21.

38. See Renwick, W.L. *Moving Targets* ... op.cit. p.10 and the 'Currie Commission Report', *Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand*, July, Wellington. New Zealand Government Printer. 1962.

39. Walker's distinctions between *political* delegation to other elected boards or officials and delegated responsibility to *administrative appointees* without a direct mandate have been adopted (see Walker W.G. "Administrative Structure: Centralization or Decentralization" in G.S Harman and C. Selby Smith (eds.) *Designing a New Education Authority.* Canberra. Australian National University. 1973). Another useful device is to examine the locus of control over specific administrative functions, especially in settings where dual systems of political governance and administrative process apply and where vetoes are irregularly exercised (see Chapman, R.J. "Regionalization of the Administration of Public Education in Canada" Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. University of Alberta. 1974).

40. Watkins, P. *Agency and Structure: Dialectics in the Administration of Education.* Geelong. Deakin University Press. 1985.

41. Renwick, W.L. *Moving Targets* ... op.cit. pp. 12-14.

42. The section is, in substantial part, Renwick W.L. "An Agenda for Primary Teachers", paper given to the Manawatu Branch of the New Zealand Educational Institute, 18th of November, 1975.

43. The organization of education is a leit-motif in Renwick's 1970 writings. An annual selection on the issue over five years might include: "Educational Reorganization: Possibilities and Problems" given to the Conference of New Zealand Education Boards Association, Napier, 25 September, 1975; "Trends and Issues in Tertiary Education" given to the New Zealand Ed-

ucational Administration Society Administrative Staff Course, Palmerston North, 17 September, 1976; "Reorganizing the Head Office of the Department of Education" a policy statement, February, 1977; "Towards the Year 2000: Education" given to the Commission for the Future, October, 1978; and "The Objectives and Functions of the Department of Education and its Relationship with the Education System" a policy statement, 31 October, 1979.

In the 1980s, structural reform was attempted in many States' education departments in Australia; Renwick sometimes playing an advisory role, most notably in Victoria in the early 1980s. It is interesting that, in Victoria, the general consequences include the devolution of Director-Generals' powers, bureaucratic confusion over regionalization when overtaken by budgetary crises, and repeated practical and theoretical problems due to the limitations of structural-functionalism (see Shears L.W. *Administrative Structures in Education.* Melbourne. Office of the Coordinator General. 1984; Angus, L. et al. *Restructuring Victorian Education: A Report to the State Board of Education.* Geelong. Deakin Institute for Studies in Education. 1984; Macpherson, R.J.S. "The Politics of Regionalization in Victoria's Department of Education: 1959-1979", *Australian Journal of Education.* 31,2. August, 1987. 187-204; and Macpherson, R.J.S. "Reform and Regional Administration of Education in Victoria: 1979-1983", *Australian Journal of Public Administration.* 45, 3. 1986. 216-229.

44. Renwick, W.L. "Rights to Education", in *Moving Targets ...* op.cit. pp.23-46.

45. Ibid. p.24.

46. Ibid. p.34.

47. Renwick. W.L. "Leopards With Changing Spots", in *Moving Targets ...* op.cit. pp.47-66.

48. Ibid. p.54.

49. Ibid. p. 66.

50. Renwick W.L. "This Side of Paradigm" in *Moving Targets ...* op.cit. pp.67-80.

51. Kuhn, T.S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* Second Edition. Chicago. University of Chicago Press. 1970.

52. This argument was strongly reinforced by recent research into the relationship between educative leadership and quality teaching. It was found that leaders should provide opportunities to allow participants to develop personal understanding, provide opportunities to form social groups to allow for mutual support during the change process, and to encourage reflection

on practice. (See Northfield J., Duignan P.A. and Macpherson R.J.S. (eds.) *Educative Leadership for Quality Teaching.*)

53. Soltis, J.F. "On the Nature of Educational Research" *Educational Researchers.* 13, 10. 1984. 5.

54. Macpherson R.J.S. "Contexts of Postgraduate Research" in R.J.S. Macpherson (ed.) *Ways and Meanings of Research* ... ibid pp.1-25.

55. Walker J.C. and Evers C.W. "Theory, Politics, and Experiment in Educational Research Methodology" *International Review of Education.* 32,4. 1986. pp.373-387.

56. Morgan C. "Paradigms, Metaphors and Puzzle-Solving in Organization Theory" *Administrative Science Quarterly.* 25, 4. 1980. 605-622.

57. Renwick W.L. "Language in Our Lives" in *Moving Targets* ... op.cit. pp. 81-102.

58. Ibid. p.85.

59. See Ibid. p.97-98; Spoonley P., Macpherson C., Pearson D., and Sedgwick C. (eds.) *Tauiwi: Racism and Ethnicity in New Zealand.* Palmerston North. Dunmore. 1984; Levine S. and Vasil R. *Maori Political Perspectives.* Auckland. Hutchinson. 1985; Awatere D. *Maori Sovereignty.* Auckland. Broadsheet. 1984; and Bray D.H and Hill, C.G.N. *Polynesian and Pakeha in New Zealand Education: Volume 1, The Sharing of Cultures.* Palmerston North. Bennett. 1973. For an outstanding literary treatment see Hulme K. *The Bone People.* Auckland. Hodder and Stoughton. 1985.

60. Renwick W.L.*Moving Targets* ... op.cit. p.99.

61. Ibid. pp.103-124.

62. Ibid. p.xv.

63. Ibid. p.xvi.

64. Renwick W.L. "Marrying the Spirit of the Age" in Renwick W.L. *Moving Targets* ... op.cit. pp.103-124.

65. Ibid. p.123.

66. Ibid. p.124.

67. Murray H.A. *Myth and Mythmaking.* New York. Braziller. 1960; Larue G.A. *Ancient Myth and Modern Man.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Prentice-Hall. 1975.

68. Larue G.A. *Ancient Myth* ... Ibid; Sproul B.C. *Primal Myths: Creating the World* Sydney. Rider. 1979.

69. Sproul B.C. *Primal Myths* ... Ibid.; and Otto W.F. *Dionysus, Myth and Cult.* Translated by R.B. Palmer. Bloomington. Indiana University Press. 1965.

70. See the Education and Science Select Committee's *Report on the Inquiry into the Quality of Teaching*, op.cit.; and Macpherson R.J.S. "The 'Scott Report' on the Quality of Teaching in New Zealand: A Critical Review" in Northfield J., et al. (eds.) *Educative Leadership for Quality Teaching*. op.cit.